



LAFIA (PEOPLE AT PEACE)

ENDLINE REPORT

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 24-month Lafia program was designed to help urban and rural communities in southern Mali increase their resilience to conflict and violent extremism.

In order to measure the degree to which the project's objectives were achieved and compared to the expected results, a final evaluation was conducted to determine the change brought about by the project and the effectiveness of the approaches used by the program in the context, as well as to provide Mercy Corps and other stakeholders with necessary information related to the effective implementation of similar programs in the future.

This evaluation provided the level of performance of key project indicators, as well as levels of violence in communities, community perceptions of trust and satisfaction with local authorities, and prospects for social cohesion. The survey was conducted in the Kayes region and the District of Bamako, areas that are vulnerable to violence and conflict.

Overall, the results of the study show the effectiveness of the program in terms of the level of progress of key performance indicators related to the security situation, prospects for social cohesion, vulnerability factors and resilience to conflict and violent extremism.

Principal Results

- The level of safety and violence in the communities

Overall, communities feel that insecurity and violence have decreased considerably in both Bamako and Kayes. Indeed, at the time of the baseline study, **38%** of those interviewed felt that their communities were peaceful, safe and secure, and by the end of the project the rate had increased to **51%**. This increase is related to the training/capacity building activities on appropriate techniques for prevention and resolution of inter-community disputes conducted by Mercy Corps project actors and implementing partner Think Peace. According to the results of our focus groups during the Outcome Harvesting, the community members manage to deal with the various conflicts/tensions that arise within the community through dialogue. In addition, awareness campaigns/caravans on peaceful cohabitation are conducted in the various intervention zones.

- Youth participation in the productive life of the community

Given the trends that have emerged, this indicator aimed at assessing the contribution of young men and women to the construction of a safe and/or productive community, which was **37%** at the beginning, is **52%** at the end of the program, i.e., an increase of **15%**.

This result is due to the real willingness of young people to get involved and participate actively in the management of community affairs (construction or rehabilitation of local mosques, cleaning of gutters, etc.), thus enabling them to assert themselves within the community. Both individual and collective changes following the different sessions are really appreciated by the community.

- Social cohesion in the community

More than two thirds (**70%**) of the respondents have a positive perception of their community in terms of mutual aid and collaboration for the benefit of the community. Following the intervention of the Lafia program in the intervention zones, **64%** of respondents in the Kayes region and **76%** in the Bamako district think that the overall climate of cohesion both among community members and with neighboring communities is better. This is an overall improvement of **6%** compared to the initial situation of **64%** at baseline. Overall, opinions are broadly shared by age and gender, providing interesting insights into community dynamics and opportunities to promote intercultural and ethnic activities in their respective communities.

- Conflict management, capacity, and willingness of communities to identify the causes of conflict

70% of the interviewees feel confident in the ability of community leaders to better prevent and peacefully resolve inter-community disputes. This is an improvement of 10% compared to the initial situation of 60%.

- Peace agreement and trust in government

Based on individual interviews, particularly with resource persons or key informants (including customary authorities, religious leaders, political and community leaders), 59% of respondents in the Kayes region believe that national policies to promote peace will benefit their ethnic and geographic communities. This represents an increase of 12% compared to the baseline of 47%.

I. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Background

The Lafia program, which means *People at Peace* in Bambara, was implemented by Mercy Corps in Mali in the Kayes region and Bamako district, aiming to increase the resilience of urban and rural communities in southern Mali to conflict and violent extremism. While instability has plagued northern and central Mali since 2012, the south of the country has remained relatively stable. However, a Mercy Corps assessment in Bamako and three circles of Kayes showed that many fractures now threaten this fragile peace. In both urban and rural areas, young men and women were frustrated by perceived injustices, lack of economic opportunities, and the absence of functional government services. In rural areas, competition for land and water between Fulani pastoralists and Bambara and Soninke farmers could trigger further violence if left unmanaged. At the political level, resentment against the perceived lack of southern engagement in national peace processes, coupled with the flow of resources to the north, was seen as an additional risk to southern stability.

1.2 Duration

Two years, October 2019 to September 2021.

1.3 Zones of Intervention

The project intervened in the district of Bamako and the region of Kayes, specifically in twelve (12) communes, of which ten (10) were in Kayes and two (2) were in Bamako.

1.4 Target Group and Impact Group

The mission of this project was to prevent and mitigate violence in the intervention circles through several activities, namely Sport for Change (S4C), Early Warning System (EWS), training and implementation of joint and/or community projects.

The project focused on targeting and making an impact on the following populations in the Kayes region and the Bamako district:

- Young people at risk of radicalization,
- State leaders and services
- Community leaders
- Women's associations

1.5 Program Objectives and Outcomes

The Lafia program had three interrelated objectives:

- Objective 1: Reduced vulnerability of youth to involvement in resource-based conflict, political conflict, and violent extremism.
- Objective 2: Traditional, religious, women and government leaders peacefully resolve inter-group conflicts and reduce conflict drivers.

- Objective 3: Local communities actively engage with government authorities and relevant civil society actors in the implementation of national policies to prevent violent extremism and promote reconciliation.

1.6 Scope of the Evaluation

In order to measure the level of achievement of the project's objectives and compare them to the expected results, a final evaluation was conducted by the Monitoring and Evaluation team to determine the change brought about by the project and the effectiveness of the approaches used in the context, as well as to provide Mercy Corps and other stakeholders with the necessary information for the effective and efficient implementation of similar projects in the future. This report also explains the key guidelines that guided the conduct of the final evaluation of the Lafia program activities. These guidelines will address both general and technical aspects of Mercy Corps.

1.7 Use and Users of Evaluation Results

For whom is the evaluation for?	How will the information be used?
Mercy Corps	To determine the change achieved through the intervention, document the lessons learned from the program in terms of the impact of its intervention on the lives of participants and in the community, on the reduction of violence and the prevention of violence through the different systems put in place.
USAID	The information provided will help the donor not only to assess the level of achievement of the expected results of this project, but also in its decision making in funding future peace-related projects in Mali and likely beyond.
Government of Mali	The information can be used by local authorities to assess the quality of interventions for communities in conflict and/or used as a resource by other structures/organizations.
Municipalities	The results will serve as a reference for the communes in maintaining peace through social activities.

With respect to the Mercy Corps project management approach, a baseline study was conducted at the start of the project. The indicators defined are elements of judgment in assessing the results of the Lafia program. The level of the indicators will help illustrate the changes caused by the project between the beginning and the end of the implementation.

II. OBJECTIVES OF THE EVALUATION

This final evaluation is intended to assess the implementation of the Lafia program at the end of its life cycle by identifying its strengths and weaknesses, through an analysis of its effectiveness and initial effects in order to assess whether the program has produced the expected effects/results by optimizing the resources allocated. The data from this study will serve as a guide/benchmark for future similar programs. The evaluation was conducted using a comparable methodology (quantitative and qualitative data collection) to that of the baseline studies so that results could be reliably measured.

Specifically, the objectives of this evaluation were to:

- Measure the level of achievement of objectives and compare them to target values;
- Verify whether the effects felt by beneficiaries/participants are a result of the project;
- Report on the project "impacts" and outcome indicators by examining the extent to which participants have adopted the new behaviors envisioned in the theory of change;
- Identify and understand the positive and success factors, as well as the weaknesses and dysfunctions, in order to draw lessons and learn from them for future programming.

III. DIMENSIONS OF THE ANALYSIS AND KEY QUESTIONS

The analysis focused on the following evaluation dimensions and related key questions:

- **Efficiency**
 - Did the intervention achieve its stated (or implied) objectives, based on its actual achievements and results?
 - What were the main factors that contributed to the achievement or non-achievement of objectives?
 - How did the intervention address or reduce the conflict factors and key tensions identified at the beginning/during the project? Was a change in behavior/perception identified? If so, why?
 - Did the project contribute to increasing the capacity of communities to respond to crisis/conflict? If yes, why? If not, what were the shortcomings?
- **Sustainability**
 - Has the project invested sufficient resources to ensure continuity of activities after project closure?
 - What steps have been taken or planned to create sustainable processes/institutions/norms for peace?
 - To what extent has the participation of youth, men and women been achieved?
 - Is there a solid exit plan or handover strategy for local actors to build or continue their own peacebuilding initiatives?
- **Gender Mainstreaming**
 - Did the intervention produce different outcomes for women and men, and boys and girls?
 - To what extent did the project consider and address gender inequalities?
 - To what extent did the project take into account gender equality criteria in its daily management?

IV. METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

4.1 Sampling and Selection of Participants

The final evaluation was conducted in the same communes as the baseline evaluation. We used stratified sampling proportional to size, with each commune representing a stratum. The sample size was calculated by region using the parameters below:

Sample size estimation parameter:

Parameters	
Acceptable margin of error	5%
Confidence level	95%
Proportion variable / distribution of responses	50%

Using these parameters, we obtained the minimum sample size per region:

For the Kayes region: 384 people

For the Bamako region: 385 people

Sample size adjustment for non-response

To this minimum sample size, we added the non-response rate of 10%. Thus, for this survey, we considered a sample of 422 people for the Kayes region and 424 people for the Bamako district. For this final evaluation, the survey was conducted in the 20 communes that were used for the baseline evaluation with individuals or groups that had been interviewed. These communes were obtained following the project's identification of communes vulnerable to conflict.

For the qualitative data collection, in the same locality, the team conducted 4 focus group discussions in each locality : 2 with adults (men/women) and 2 others with young boys and girls

For the Bamako region, the same types of actors were interviewed. However, the localities in each commune were divided into neighborhood blocks.

4.2 Data Collection Tools

As in the baseline evaluation, two main collection tools were designed and administered to key informants for collection:

An individual questionnaire for quantitative data collection:

For data related to the following:

- Sociodemographic information (age, gender, ethnicity, religion, status, etc.);
- Level of violence in the community;
- Youth participation in the productive life of the community;
- Social cohesion in the community;
- Conflict management;
- Peace agreement and trust in the government;
- Capacity and willingness of communities to identify causes of conflict.

An interview guide for focus groups:

For focus groups with men, women, and youth (male and female) for qualitative data collection.

4.3 Data Collection

Mercy Corps conducted interviews and discussions in the local language. The collection team (interviewers) was trained on data collection tools and other aspects of the research including:

- The purpose of the study, background information and objectives;
- The different information needs of the study;
- The information/data collection technique
- Data collection tools;
- Definition of different terminologies;
- Controlling for bias in data collection;
- Ethical considerations.

Specific arrangements were made to ensure that the data collected was of good quality; this involved solid training of interviewers, supervision of collection, and restrictions on the questionnaire. Mercy Corps teams in Bamako and Kayes also provided supervision.

During the training, time was also spent briefing interviewers on Mercy Corps policies, including the child advocacy policy, the anti-harassment policy, the anti-fraud policy, and the code of conduct.

In addition, given the global pandemic that is COVID-19 and in order to reduce the risk of spreading the disease, we ensured strict adherence to the barrier measures recommended by Mercy Corps. These included maintaining a social distance of 1 to 2 meters between participants, controlling access to the office, requiring hand washing before entering the training room, avoiding handshaking, or kissing, making the wearing of masks mandatory, monitoring the temperature of participants, and taking appropriate action if any of these rules were not followed.

To ensure that the questionnaire was well understood, Mercy Corps conducted a pre-test of the questionnaire with communities not involved in this evaluation. During this simulation, all the information collection tools were used to detect any difficulties/problems in order to adjust the questionnaire as needed and in time.

After collection, consistency checks were also conducted to ensure the quality of the data.

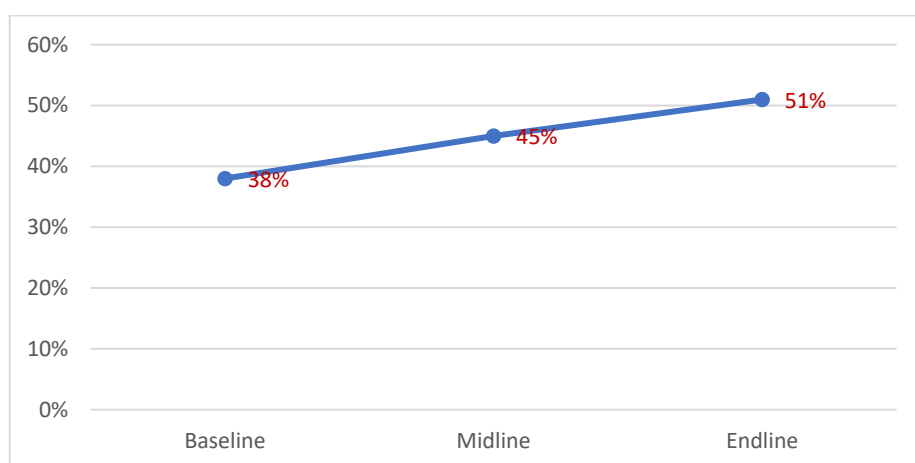
4.4 Limitations of the Study

At the end of the project, the people who were interviewed during the baseline assessment could not be found for the most part. The reasons were that the questionnaire for the baseline assessment did not include the question about the respondent's telephone number, and they were replaced by others in the community. In the communes where the project had not intervened, we encountered many refusals to answer the questionnaires and many dropouts.

V. RESULTS RELATED TO THE ANALYSIS OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROJECT

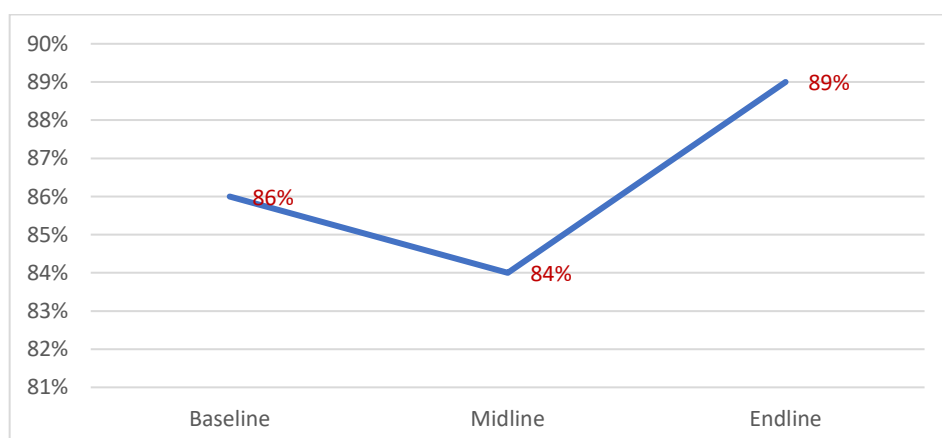
The graphs above present both the level of progress of the performance indicators as well as the degree of achievement of the objectives by making a comparative analysis between the starting situation and that at the end of the program:

G1: Percentage who feel that their communities are and will continue to be peaceful, safe and secure.



This indicator, designed to assess the level of security, peace and safety in the communities concerned, increased by 13%. Indeed, at the beginning 38% of the interviewees had estimated that their communities were peaceful, safe, and secure and at the end of the project the rate had increased to 51%. This result is not accidental. Indeed, it can be explained by the fact that the Lafia program has placed community capacity building at the heart of its implementation strategy in order to train, sensitize and, above all, equip them with appropriate techniques for preventing and resolving inter-community disputes. In fact, according to the results of our focus groups during the Outcome Harvesting, the community members manage to deal with the various conflicts/tensions that arise within the community through dialogue. In addition, awareness campaigns/caravans on peaceful cohabitation have been organized in the various intervention zones.

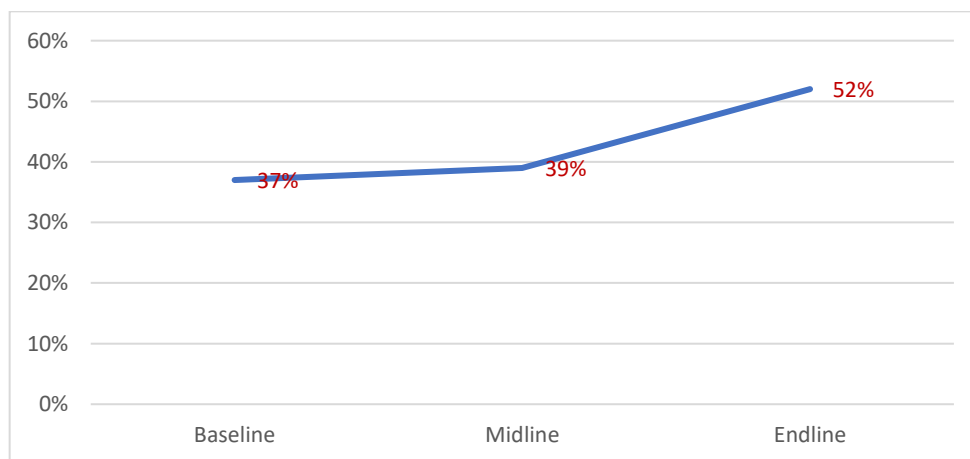
O1.1: Percentage of targeted youth who believe that the use of violence to defend a social or political cause is never justified.



The results of the analysis of this objective indicator measuring the propensity to violence by examining whether young people believe that violence cannot be justified for a social or political cause were at the beginning at **86%** and at the end of the Lafia program intervention it increased to **89%**. This is explained by the fact that the youth (girls and boys) have, throughout the period of execution of the project, fully participated in the different sports sessions. According to the results of the FGDs in the outcome harvesting of the S4C (sport for change) activity, the youth reported that these sessions not only increased their self-confidence, sense of responsibility and leadership, but also enabled them to work for a collective cause within their respective communities in order to reduce their participation in acts of violence

Similarly, awareness caravans against drug use among youth in the different intervention communities have reached a considerable number of young girls and boys. An activity much appreciated by community leaders.

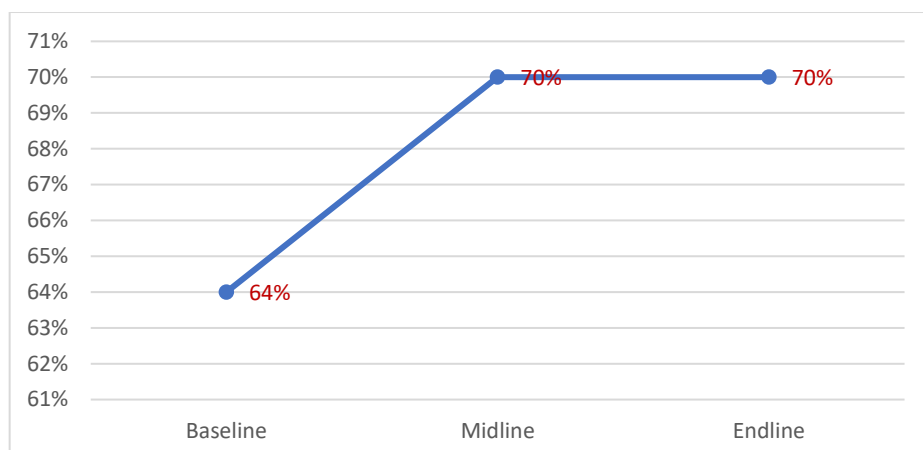
O1.2: Percentage of young men and women who agree that they are involved in creating a safe and productive society.



This indicator aimed at appreciating young men and women for their contribution to building a safe and/or productive community, which was **37%** at the beginning, is **52%** at the end of the project, an increase of **15%**.

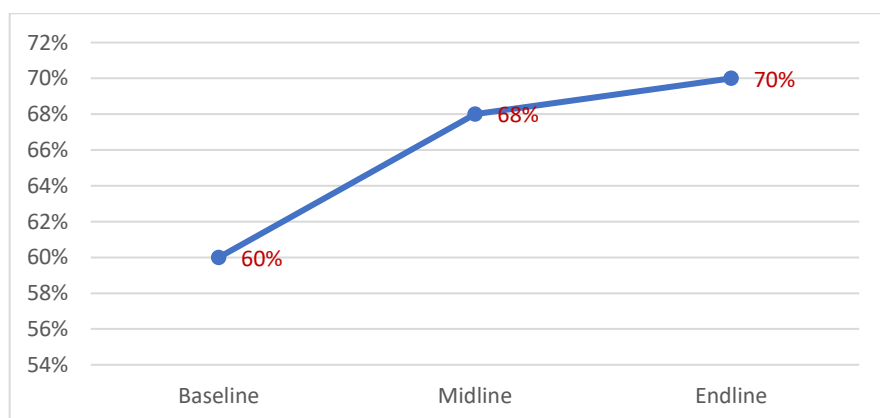
In fact, as revealed by the outcome harvesting, the adults stated that they had observed an increase in the youth's awareness of the need to get involved and actively participate in the management of community affairs (construction or rehabilitation of local mosques, cleaning of gutters, etc.), thus enabling them to assert themselves within the community since their participation in the Lafia program activities. Both individual and collective changes following the different sessions were appreciated by the community.

O2.1: Percentage of people who believe there is social cohesion in the community



Compared to the pre-project situation, where 64% of the interviewees stated that the overall climate of cohesion both among community members and with neighboring communities was good, at the end of the project there was an improvement in the level of social relations and collaboration as well as the level of trust and social interaction. In fact, 70% of respondents feel that there is cohesion within their community at the end of the project. This is partly due to the constant support of the project actors and the accompaniment to the realization of projects and initiatives developed by the communities such as the realization of boreholes, large diameter wells, rehabilitation of socio-cultural and sports spaces (basketball court and others), factors that stimulate social cohesion within the communities.

O2.2: Percentage of people who believe that conflict management officials in their area are able to prevent and resolve conflicts in their community

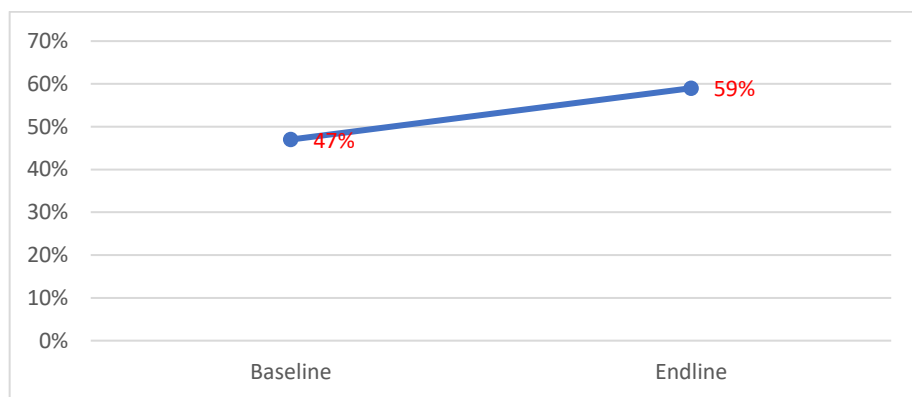


This variable, designed to examine the ability of customary or traditional leaders (village chiefs, councilors, etc.) and government and communal authorities (mayors, prefects, etc.) in charge of resolving disputes to prevent and/or peacefully resolve community conflicts by reaching an equitable solution, increased by 10%.

Overall, 71% of respondents in Kayes and 68% in Bamako feel confident in the ability of community leaders to better prevent and peacefully resolve intercommunity disputes. In contrast, initially only 55% of respondents in Kayes and 65% in Bamako felt confident in the leaders' ability to resolve conflicts. This rate could be linked to capacity building of community authorities on new tools and

techniques to prevent and mitigate the serious consequences of inter- and intra- community conflicts, but also and above all to the operationalization of the early warning and response mechanism to local conflicts.

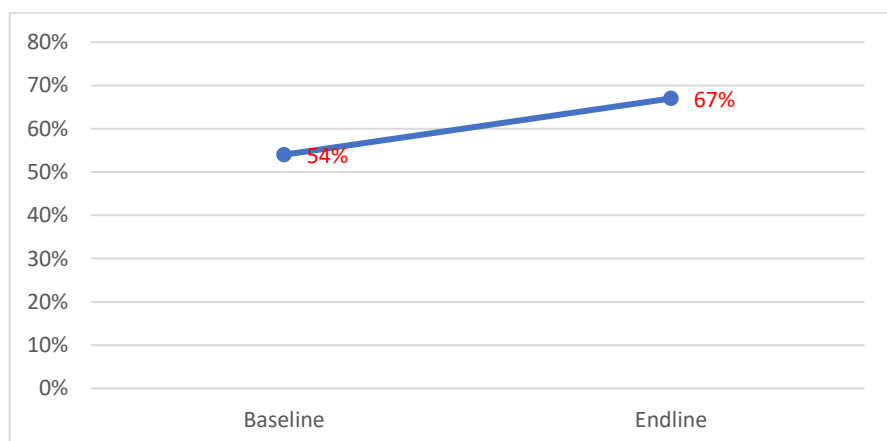
03.1: Percentage of people who believe that national policies to promote peace will benefit their ethnic and geographic communities.



This variable, designed to measure those who believe that national policies to promote peace will benefit their ethnic and geographic communities, increased from **47%** at baseline to **59%** at the end of the program, an increase of **12%**.

This rate is explained by the fact that communities were unaware of both the existence and content of the peace agreement between the Malian government and the armed groups, as well as the national policy to prevent violent extremism. The discussion and sharing forums and dissemination workshops in the Kayes region and Bamako district helped explain the content of these policies (the pillars, national strategies, benefits, etc.).

03.2: Percentage of people who report receiving information on a regular basis about national peace policies



Compared to the pre-project situation, the findings show a 13% increase in this indicator, which measures regular access to information on national peace promotion policies, as a result of the Lafia program's efforts to increase community support for the implementation of these policies. The survey identified multiple existing mechanisms for sharing information on national peace policy. In rural areas, these channels include consultation frameworks/meetings, town criers, and radio stations. In

urban areas, the appropriate means of conveying messages on peace and violent extremism are the media (television, radio, social networks, etc.).

Detailed table of results:

code	Indicator	Baseline	Midline	Endline	
G1	Percentage of people who feel that their communities are and will continue to be peaceful, safe and secure.	38%	45%	51%	
	Women	42%	52%	67%	
	Men	35%	40%	45%	
	Bamako	36%	42%	70%	
	Kayes	40%	48%	38%	
	Youth	38%	46%	59%	
	Adults	39%	45%	46%	
	15-19 years	36%	50%	60%	
	20-24 years	40%	42%	65%	
	25-35 years	35%	45%	56%	
	More than 35 years	39%	45%	50%	
	Unknown	47%	42%	50%	
	O1.1	Percentage of targeted youth who believe that the use of violence to defend a social or political cause is never justified	86%	84%	89%
		Women	90%	88%	94%
Men		83%	81%	86%	
Bamako		88%	76%	88%	
Kayes		83%	90%	90%	
Youth		85%	82%	54%	
Adults		87%	87%	91%	
15-19 years		84%	88%	91%	
20-24 years		88%	80%	82%	
25-35 years		83%	80%	87%	
More than 35 years		87%	87%	91%	
Unknown		88%	75%	86%	
O1.2		Percentage of Youth, Men, and Women who agree that they are helping to create a safe and productive society	37%	39%	52%
		Women	38%	28%	26%
	Men	37%	48%	22%	
	Bamako	39%	47%	27%	
	Kayes	35%	33%	22%	
	Youth	37%	39%	52%	
	Adults	NA	NA	0%	
	15-19 years	29%	18%	47%	
	20-24 years	30%	33%	55%	
	25-35 years	43%	49%	51%	
	More than 35 years	NA	NA	0%	
	Unknown	NA	NA	0%	



O2.1	Percentage of people who believe there is social cohesion in the community	64%	70%	70%
	Women	68%	69%	71%
	Men	60%	71%	69%
	Bamako	57%	60%	76%
	Kayes	70%	78%	64%
	Youth	59%	62%	69%
	Adults	70%	78%	71%
	15-19 years	57%	54%	73%
	20-24 years	48%	65%	63%
	25-35 years	65%	64%	70%
	More than 35 years	70%	78%	71%
	Unknown	41%	67%	43%
O2.2	Percentage of people who believe that conflict management officials in their area are able to prevent and resolve conflicts in their community.	60%	68%	70%
	Women	64%	70%	75%
	Men	57%	66%	68%
	Bamako	65%	69%	68%
	Kayes	55%	66%	71%
	Youth	59%	64%	71%
	Adults	62%	72%	70%
	15-19 years	54%	56%	87%
	20-24 years	55%	69%	72%
	25-35 years	63%	64%	67%
	More than 35 years	62%	72%	70%
	Unknown	41%	67%	43%
O3.1	Percentage of people who believe that national policies to promote peace will benefit their ethnic and geographic communities	47%	83%	59%
	Women	50%	75%	43%
	Men	46%	85%	64%
	Bamako	36%	83%	57%
	Kayes	71%	83%	63%
	Youth	38%	75%	60%
	Adults	55%	87%	59%
	15-19 years	33%	100%	NA
	20-24 years	33%	50%	NA
	25-35 years	39%	78%	60%
	More than 35 years	55%	87%	59%
	Unknown	100%	NA	50%
O3.2	Percentage of people who report receiving information on a regular basis about national peace policies	54%	71%	67%
	Women	46%	71%	64%
	Men	60%	71%	46%
	Bamako	67%	69%	66%

	Kayes	41%	72%	67%
	Youth	55%	67%	61%
	Adults	54%	79%	72%
	15-19 years	40%	64%	56%
	20-24 years	53%	61%	58%
	25-35 years	61%	70%	64%
	More than 35 years	54%	79%	72%
	Unknown	29%	8%	57%

VI. RESULTS RELATED TO THE SUSTAINABILITY ANALYSIS

With a view to sustaining the project's achievements, strengthening social ties and collaborative relationships within the beneficiary communities, a number of measures/initiatives have been taken or planned according to the participants in the various discussions (focus groups, workshops, individual interviews) to create sustainable processes/institutions/norms for peace.

Measures/initiatives taken or planned to sustain gains	Number of respondents		
	Bamako	Kayes	Total
Maximize awareness sessions during celebrations as well as inter-community meetings on conflict prevention and management for sustainable peace	4	13	17
Continue and perpetuate the initiatives/messages received in our communities	1	10	11
Encouraging youth to become entrepreneurs		2	2
Assisting law enforcement in the peacekeeping process		5	5
Establish associations or committees to manage conflicts		8	8
Reactivate the vigilance brigades and organize periodic meetings between the men, youth, and women of the village.		2	2
Grand Total	5	40	45

VII. GENDER MAINSTREAMING

The project produced different results for the men, women, young girls and young boys who all participated actively and equally in the project activities. The Sport for Change project was composed

of both male and female clubs, with male and female instructors sharing the same roles in conflict management, as well as female and male leaders.

In the Outcome Study, we conducted focus groups with women, men, young girls and young boys. After analysis, it was found that:

The men who were already in conflict management, have had capacity building and are now doing it in a peaceful way, working together to bring cohesion in the community and have become more tolerant of women and youth boys and girls.

The young boys are now respected and considered by the elders and the village or district chiefs and their advisors, because they now have a place in the patriarchal house when decisions are made. They are listened to, and their opinion is taken into account.

The women are now consulted and participate in decision making, they have access to information when there is a rumor (conflict) and by their own means put an end to these conflicts without going to the head of the neighborhood or village. Thanks to the EWS, they have taken on positions of responsibility that they were previously not allowed to have, in the same way as the men, and they play an essential role in conflict prevention and management. Previously, they were completely sidelined. They are more listened to and respected for what they say and for what they do.

The young girls: Before Lafia's intervention, the community had a negative perception of girls / women's sports activities (soccer or basketball) because sports were long considered an activity for boys only. After the project, the girls saw themselves in the forefront along with the boys and went beyond the community's prejudices about their participation in sports. This contributes to their development in the same way as the boys. Although they are not yet involved in community decision-making, they are beginning to take initiatives at the community level, such as organizing community service activities like village sanitation.

VIII. EFFECTS OF THE PROJECT

8.1 Results of the Group Interviews

In addition to quantitative data, focus group discussions were conducted to gather as much information as possible about respondents' perceptions of the conflict situation (level of violence and insecurity, participation of Youth and women's groups in the peace process and social cohesion, etc.).

- Perceptions of households and different focus groups on the level of violence and insecurity in the communities

Overall, the information from the various focus group discussions on questions related to levels of violence, insecurity, and the level of trust and collaboration between members of their community clearly show remarkable changes following the implementation of the Lafia program. Indeed, when asked about the current level of violence and the security situation in their community, half of the respondents remain optimistic about the improvement of the security situation in their community. According to FGD participants, the level of trust has increased even though rivalry or competition still exists between youth, women and men, but they accept each other.

If the level of violence and delinquency was quite high among young people in Bamako as well as in the localities concerned in the Kayes region before the intervention of the Lafia program, nowadays it has drastically decreased, especially in the areas known as violent zones. This is thanks to Lafia's activities (caravan/awareness campaign as well as training and sports and cultural activities). **"Currently in our community, it is the youth themselves who keep watch at night to ensure the security of the village and its surroundings,"** said a young leader (monitor) from the community of Tafacirga Gadiaga in the Kayes circle.

- **Focus group participants' perceptions of the level of youth involvement and participation in building a safe and productive community.**

In Bamako, youths were more active in political and income-generating activities (trade and so on). Managing collective and community affairs was not their priority. The project, through training sessions, sports and cultural activities, has succeeded in getting youth to participate actively in community activities (building socio-cultural infrastructure, ceremonies, for example). In Kayes, communities report a real improvement in the level of confidence and involvement of youth and groups of young boys and girls in building a peaceful, safe community. **"Before, youth were just pushed aside, they weren't really associated with common causes. But now the youth are key actors, even the cornerstones of the realization of community activities, such as road rehabilitation, water supply, sanitation, reforestation, organization of cultural and sports activities. They help the women in the development of market gardens, mediation during community conflicts. In the same way, our youth who are currently in exile contribute financially to the success of community activities"**, testified a community leader from the rural commune of Koussané in the circle of Kayes during the Outcome Harvesting workshop of S4C activities.

- **Focus Group Discussions (FGD) respondent's perceptions of community leaders' ability to peacefully resolve local conflicts**

Overall, the information from the discussion sessions with respondents indicates the existence of traditional mechanisms for resolving local conflicts (committees of wise men composed of traditional leaders and including people considered middle class, etc). These mechanisms were deficient in their role of preventing and resolving inter- and intra- community disputes because of the lack of appropriate and effective resolution techniques. The arrival of Mercy Corps in their communities, through the Lafia program, helped to better equip community and administrative authorities through training and capacity building sessions/workshops on conflict resolution techniques and the early warning and rapid response system. **"In the past, we used to refer our land disputes, interpersonal and inter-professional conflicts (especially between farmers and herders) to the regional level because of the inability of our chiefs, despite their efforts, to manage them peacefully. But today, following their participation in the Lafia program's trainings, whatever the type and state of the conflict, they manage to find equitable solutions. I personally intervene in our neighboring families in case of marital conflicts, thanks to the training I received,"** reports a woman leader from the town of Falémé, in the Kayes circle.

8.2 Results of individual surveys on the level of project performance

The final evaluation allowed us to know the level of performance of the indicators and the achievement of the objectives. Through the Outcome Harvesting data, we will highlight the changes that the Sport for Change, Early Warning System (EWS) and community projects and initiatives have brought to the community.

IX. CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the results shown above, after two years of implementation and in the localities where it has intervened, Lafia has achieved most of its expected objectives and has had significant effects on the community. Referring to the overall objective of the evaluation, the following are the main findings and conclusions in relation to the key indicators.

G1: Percentage who feel their communities are and will continue to be peaceful, safe and secure:

With the involvement of local leaders, youth and adults (men and women), Lafia through Sport for Change activities has increased the knowledge and confidence of the youth, (Kayes and Bamako) who have become very proactive in dealing with existing conflicts and enterprising in dealing with future conflicts. Customary leaders have strengthened their leadership in peacekeeping by participating fully in the program. As a result, the perception of each other in terms of security has increased considerably (13% increase, reaching **51%**). Through his intervention, Lafia offered the community the opportunity to create or perpetuate a climate where understanding, cohesion and acceptance of all will be the engines of a better life in the community. However, even if the objective was achieved, for a truly sustainable peace, the continuation of activities is a necessity.

✓ O1.1: Percentage of targeted Youth who believe that the use of violence to defend a social or political cause is never justified:

Youth are using less violence as a means of defense, and their perception of how to express their emotions or to make themselves heard has changed; they now do so in a peaceful and reasoned manner. However, we noticed during the Outcome Study that the youth are increasingly frustrated because of unemployment. It would be necessary and important to integrate training activities in trades such as sewing, welding, fattening, and market gardening, and to provide them with the financial means to implement their skills. This could greatly contribute to the reduction of delinquency and depravity of the youth.

✓ O1.2: Percentage of youth, men, and women who agree that they are helping to create a safe and productive society:

Overall, **51%** of the youth think they are in favor of this indicator in their community. However, even though there has been an increase, this is not enough to ensure that even after Lafia's intervention, these youth, men, and women will continue to be actors in the creation of **a safe and productive society**. It would be important to consider integrating a component to support youth with income-generating activities for the sustainability of the impact on youth.

✓ O2.1: Percentage of people who believe there is social cohesion in the community:

The level of trust between the communities has increased to **70%** and this is on several levels:

- Different communities that used to be in conflict now work together for cohesion,
- Ethnic groups that were once segregated in life events now participate equally in all social events in the community.

Even though the result is quite positive at this level, the road to global acceptance is long and therefore more activities are needed that will lead the community to trust each other more, to foster more dialogue on the importance of accepting diversity/difference in all aspects.

✓ **O2.2: Percentage of people who believe that conflict management officials in their area are able to prevent and resolve conflicts in their community:**

Customary and local leaders have been heavily involved in almost all of the activities Lafia has conducted during its intervention. They have been trained to better prevent conflict and equipped with tools to resolve them in a very peaceful manner. And little by little they regained the trust of the community, they became very independent and their capacity to resolve conflict and create a climate of cohesion really increased (up to 70%).

✓ **O3.1: Percentage of people who believe that national policies to promote peace will benefit their ethnic and geographic communities:**

This indicator for the end of the program is 59%, which still shows a lack of awareness of the two policies. Since the beginning of Lafia's project until now, the country has experienced a reversal of the situation vis-à-vis the government, resulting in instability in the country. Therefore, forums or even dissemination of the content of the peace agreement in support of government structures should be organized at several levels: communes, cercles and regions.

O3.2: Percentage of people who report receiving information on a regular basis about national peace policies:

The recommendations that were made during the Baseline should be renewed for future interventions or similar projects, even if the indicator is at 67%, there are still many other activities to be carried out in this sense so that communities are regularly informed about peace policies, even if this must involve the participation of local or national authorities in the country.



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